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Old South Leaflets.

No. 155.

Captain Thomas
Wheeler's Nar-
rative. 1675.

A TRUE NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S PROVIDENCES IN VARIOUS DISPENSATIONS TOWARDS CAPTAIN EDWARD HUTCHINSON OF BOSTON AND MY SELF, AND THOSE THAT WENT WITH US INTO THE NIPMUCK COUNTRY, AND ALSO TO QUABAUG, ALIAS BROOKFIELD: THE SAID CAPTAIN HUTCHINSON HAVING A COMMISSION FROM THE HONOURED COUNCIL OF THIS COLONY TO TREAT WITH SEVERAL SACHEMS IN THOSE PARTS IN ORDER TO THE PUBLICK PEACE, AND MY SELF BEING ALSO ORDERED BY THE SAID COUNCIL TO ACCOMPANY HIM WITH PART OF MY TROOP FOR SECURITY FROM ANY DANGER THAT MIGHT BE FROM THE INDIANS: AND TO ASSIST HIM IN THE TRANSACTION OF MATTERS COMMITTED TO HIM.

The said Captain Hutchinson, and myself, with about twenty men or more marched from Cambridge to Sudbury, July 28, 1675; and from thence into the Nipmuck Country, and finding that the Indians had deserted their towns, and we having gone until we came within two miles of New Norwitch, on July 31, (only we saw two Indians having an horse with them, whom we would have spoke with, but they fled from us and left their horse, which we took), we then thought it not expedient to march any further that way, but set our march for Brookfield, whither we came on the Lord's day about noon. From thence the same day, (being August 1,) we understanding that the Indians were about ten miles north west from us, we sent out four men to acquaint the Indians that we were not come to harm them, but our business was only to deliver a Message from our Honoured Governour and Council to them, and to receive their answer, we desiring to come to a Treaty of Peace with them, (though they had for

E83
67
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several dayes fled from us,) they having before professed friendship, and promised fidelity to the English. When the messengers came to them they made an alarm, and gathered together about an hundred and fifty fighting men as near as they could judge. The young men amongst them were *stout* in their speeches, and surly in their carriage. But at length some of the chief Sachems promised to meet us on the next morning about 8 of the clock upon a plain within three miles of Brookfield, with which answer the messengers returned to us. Whereupon, though their speeches and carriage did much discourage divers of our company, yet we conceived that we had a cleer call to go to meet them at the place whither they had promised to come. Accordingly we with our men accompanied with three of the principal inhabitants of that town marched to the plain appointed; but the treacherous heathen intending mischief, (if they could have opportunity), came not to the said place, and so failed our hopes of speaking with them there. Whereupon the said Captain Hutchinson* and my self, with the rest of our company, considered what was best to be done, whether we should go any further towards them or return, divers of us apprehending much danger in case we did proceed, because the Indians kept not promise there with us. But the three men who belonged to Brookfield were so strongly perswaded of their freedom from any ill intentions towards us, (as upon other bounds, so especially because the greatest part of those Indians belonged to David, one of their chief Sachems, who was taken to be a great friend to the English:) that the said Captain Hutchinson who was principally intrusted with the matter of Treaty with them, was thereby encouraged to proceed and march forward towards a Swampe

*[Capt. Hutchinson had a very considerable farm in the Nipmug country, and had occasion to employ several of the Nipmug sachem's men in tilling and ploughing the ground, and thereby was known to the face of many of them. The sachems sent word that they would speak with none but Capt. Hutchinson himself, and appointed a meeting at such a tree and such a time. The guide that conducted him and those that were with him through the woods brought them to a swamp [as stated in the Narrative] not far off the appointed place, out of which those Indians ran all at once and killed sixteen [but 8, as in Narrative] men, and wounded several others, of which wounds Capt. Hutchinson afterwards died, whose death is the more lamented in that his mother and several others of his relations died by the hands of the Indians, now above 30 years since. *Mss. Letter sent to London, dated Nov. 10, 1675*, as quoted by Gov. Hutchinson, I. 266.

Capt. Hutchinson belonged to Boston and had been one of its representatives, and considerably in publick life. He was son of William and the celebrated ANN Hutchinson, and was brother-in-law to Major Thomas Savage, of Boston, who married Faith, the sister of Capt. H. He was the father of the Hon. Elisha Hutchinson, one of the Counsellors of Massachusetts, who died 10 December, 1717, aged 77. The last was father of Hon. Thomas Hutchinson, born 30 January, 1674; died 3 December, 1739, whose son, Gov. Thomas Hutchinson, born 9 September, 1711, was the celebrated historian of Massachusetts. *I Savage's Winthrop*, 246. It is a little singular that the Gov. should not have met with a Narrative so particular respecting the fate of his great ancestor.]

350

where the Indians then were. When we came near the said swampe, the way was so very bad that we could march only in a single file, there being a very rocky hill on the right hand, and a thick swampe on the left. In which there were many of those cruel blood-thirsty heathen, who there way laid us, waiting an opportunity to cut us off; there being also much brush on the side of the said hill, where they lay in ambush to surprize us.* When we had marched there about sixty or seventy rods, the said perfidious Indians sent out their shot upon us as a showre of haile, they being, (as was supposed,) about two hundred men or more. We seeing our selves so beset, and not having room to fight, endeavoured to fly for the safety of our lives. In which flight we were in no small danger to be all cut off, there being a very miry swamp before us, into which we could not enter with our horses to go forwards, and there being no safety in retreating the way we came, because many of our company, who lay behind the bushes, and had let us pass by them quietly; when others had shot, they came out, and stopt our way back, so that we were forced as we could to get up the steep and rocky hill; but the greater our danger was, the greater was God's mercy in the preservation of so many of us from sudden destruction. My self being gone up part of the hill without any hurt, and perceiving some of my men to be fallen by the enemies' shot, I wheeled about upon the Indians, not calling on my men who were left to accompany me, which they in all probability would have done had they known of my return upon the enemy. They firing violently out of the swamp, and from behind the bushes on the hill side wounded me sorely, and shot my horse under me, so that he faultring and falling, I was forced to leave him, divers of the Indians being then but a few rods distant from me. My son Thomas Wheeler flying with the rest of the company, missed me amongst them, and fearing that I was either slain or much endangered, returned towards the swampe again, though he had then received a dangerous wound in the reins, where he saw in me the danger aforesaid. Whereupon, he endeavoured to rescue me, shewing himself therein a loving and dutiful son, he adventuring himself

*[It seems from a note in Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, that the Indians took a prisoner of the name of George, a christian Indian, who afterwards reported that Philip and his company of about 40 men, besides women and children, joined the Nipmuck Indians in a swamp, ten or twelve miles from Brookfield on the 5th of August. "The Indians told Philip, at his first coming, what they had done to the English at Quabaog: Then he presented and gave to three sagamores, viz. John alias Apequinash, Quansnit, and Mawtamps, to each of them about a peck of unstrung wampum, which they accepted." Philip was conducted to the swamp by two Indians, one of whom was Caleb of Tatumasket, beyond Mendon.]

into great peril of his life to help me in that distress, there being many of the enemies about me, my son set me on his own horse, and so escaped a while on foot himself, until he caught an horse whose rider was slain, on which he mounted, and so through God's great mercy we both escaped. But in this attempt for my deliverance he received another dangerous wound by their shot in his left arm. There were then slain to our great grief eight men, viz.—Zechariah Philips of Boston, Timothy Farlow,* of Billericay, Edward Coleborn, of Chelmsford, Samuel Smedly, of Concord, Sydrach Hoppood, of Sudbury, Serjeant Eyres,† Serjeant Prichard,‡ and Corporal Coy,§ the inhabitants of Brookfield aforesaid. It being the good pleasure of God, that they should all there fall by their hands, of whose good intentions they were so confident, and whom they so little mistrusted. There were also then five persons wounded, viz.—Captain Hutchinson, my self, and my son Thomas, as aforesid, Corporal French,|| of Billericay, who having killed an Indian, was (as he was taking up his gun) shot, and part of one of his thumbs taken off, and also dangerously wounded through the body near the shoulder; the fifth was John Waldoe, of Chelmsford, who was not so dangerously wounded as the rest. They also then killed five of our horses, and wounded some more, which soon died after they came to Brookfield. Upon this sudden and unexpected blow given us, (wherein we desire to look higher than man the instrument,) we returned to the town as fast as the badness of the way, and the weakness of our wounded men would permit, we being then ten miles from it. All the while we were going, we durst not stay to stanch the bleeding of our wounded men, for fear the enemy should have surprized us again, which they attempted to do, and had in probability done, but that we perceiving which way they went, wheeled off to the other hand, and so by God's good providence towards us, they missed us, and we all came readily upon, and safely to the town, though none of us knew the way to it, those of the place being slain, as aforesaid, and we avoiding any thick woods and riding in open places to prevent danger by them. Being got to the town, we speedily betook our selves to one of the largest and strongest houses therein, where

*[Timothy Farley was son of George Farley, one of the first settlers of Billerica.]

[† John Ayres.

‡ Joseph Pritchard.

§ John Coye.]

||[Corporal John French was son of Lieut. William French of Billerica. He went from Cambridge with his father to Billerica, about 1654, and lived there until his death in October, 1712, aged about 78.]

we fortified our selves in the best manner we could in such straits of time, and there resolved to keep garrison, though we were but few, and meanly fitted to make resistance against so furious enemies. The news of the Indians' treacherous dealing with us, and the loss of so many of our company thereby, did so amaze the inhabitants of the town, that they being informed thereof by us, presently left their houses, divers of them carrying very little away with them, they being afraid of the Indians sudden coming upon them; and so came to the house we were entered into, very meanly provided of cloathing, or furnished with provisions.

I perceiving my self to be disabled for the discharge of the duties of my place by reason of the wound I had received, and apprehending that the enemy would soon come to spoyle the town, and assault us in the house, I appointed Simon Davis, of Concord, James Richardson,* and John Fiske,† of Chelmsford, to manage affairs for our safety with those few men whom God hath left us, and were fit for any service, and the inhabitants of the said town; who did well and commendably perform the duties of the trust committed to them with much courage and resolution through the assistance of our gracious God, who did not leave us in our low and distressed state, but did mercifully appear for us in our greatest need, as in the sequel will clearly be manifested. Within two hours after our coming to the said house, or less, the said Captain Hutchinson and my self posted away Ephraim Curtis, of Sudbury, and Henry Young, of Concord, to go to the Honoured Council at Boston, to give them an account of the Lord's dealing with us, and our present condition. When they came to the further end of the town they saw the enemy rifling of houses which the inhabitants had forsaken. The post fired upon them, and immediately returned to us again, they discerning no safety in going forward and being desirous to inform us of the enemies' actings, that we might the more prepare for a sudden assault by them. Which indeed presently followed, for as soon as the said post was come back to us, the barbarous heathen pressed upon us in the house with great violence, sending in their shot amongst us like haile through the

*[James Richardson is supposed to have been brother to Capt. Josiah Richardson, of Chelmsford, who died 22 July, 1693, the ancestor of the Hon. Judge Richardson, of Chester. He went from Woburn, the hive from which issued most of the Richardsons, to Chelmsford, in 166-. The first Richardson who came to the Massachusetts colony was Ezekiel Richardson, who was made a freeman, in May, 1631, and was afterwards a deputy of the General Court. Samuel and Thomas were made freemen, 2 May, 1638, and they settled in Woburn, as did also, it is believed, Ezekiel, though not upon his first coming here.]

† [John Fiske was son of the Rev. John Fiske, first minister of Chelmsford.]

walls, and shouting as if they would have swallowed us up alive; but our good God wrought wonderfully for us, so that there was but one man wounded within the house, viz.—the said Henry Young, who, looking out of the garret window that evening, was mortally wounded by a shot, of which wound he died within two dayes after. There was the same day another man slain, but not in the house; a son of Serjeant Prichard's adventuring out of the house wherein we were, to his Father's house not far from it, to fetch more goods out of it, was caught by those cruel enemies as they were coming towards us, who cut off his head, kicking it about like a foot-ball, and then putting it upon a pole, they set it up before the door of his Father's house in our sight.

The night following the said blow, they did roar against us like so many wild bulls, sending in their shot amongst us till towards the moon rising, which was about three of the clock; at which time they attempted to fire our house by hay and other combustible matter which they brought to one corner of the house, and set it on fire. Whereupon some of our company were necessitated to expose themselves to very great danger to put it out. Simon Davis, one of the three appointed by my self as Captain, to supply my place by reason of my wounds, as aforesaid, he being of a lively spirit, encouraged the souldiers within the house to fire upon the Indians; and also those that adventured out to put out the fire, (which began to rage and kindle upon the house side,) with these and the like words, that *God is with us, and fights for us, and will deliver us out of the hands of these heathen;* which expressions of his the Indians hearing, they shouted and scoffed, saying: *now see how your God delivers you, or will deliver you,* sending in many shots whilst our men were putting out the fire. But the Lord of hosts wrought very graciously for us, in preserving our bodies both within and without the house from their shot, and our house from being consumed by fire, we had but two men wounded in that attempt of theirs, but we apprehended that we killed divers of our enemies. I being desirous to hasten intelligence to the Honoured Council of our present great distress, we being so remote from any succour, (it being between sixty and seventy miles from us to Boston, where the Council useth to sit) and fearing our ammunition would not last long to withstand them, if they continued so to assault us, I spake to Ephraim Curtis to adventure forth again on that service, and to attempt it on foot, as the way wherein there was most hope of getting away undiscovered; he readily assented, and accordingly

went out, but there were so many Indians every where thereabouts, that he could not pass, without apparent hazard of life, so he came back again, but towards morning the said Ephraim adventured forth the third time, and was fain to creep on his hands and knees for some space of ground, that he might not be discerned by the enemy, who waited to prevent our sending if they could have hindered it. But through God's mercy he escaped their hands, and got safely to Marlborough, though very much spent, and ready to faint by reason of want of sleep before he went from us, and his sore travel night and day in that hot season till he got thither, from whence he went to Boston; yet before the said Ephraim got to Marlborough, there was intelligence brought thither of the burning of some houses, and killing some cattel at Quabaug, by some who were going to Connecticut, but they seeing what was done at the end of the town, and hearing several guns shot off further within the town, they durst proceed no further, but immediately returned to Marlborough, though they then knew not what had befallen Captain Hutchinson and myself, and company, nor of our being there, but that timely intelligence they gave before Ephraim Curtis his coming to Marlborough, occasioned the Honoured Major Willards turning his march towards Quabaug, for their relief, who were in no small danger every hour of being destroyed; the said Major being, when he had that intelligence, upon his march another way as he was ordered by the honoured council, as is afterwards more fully expressed.

The next day being August 3d, they continued shooting and shouting, and proceeded in their former wickedness, blaspheming the name of the Lord, and reprecaching us, his afflicted servants, scoffing at our prayers as they were sending in their shot upon all quarters of the house and many of them went to the town's meeting house, (which was within twenty rods of the house in which we were) who mocked saying, come and pray, and sing psalms, and in contempt made an hideous noise somewhat resembling singing. But we, to our power, did endeavour our own defence, sending our shot amongst them, the Lord giving us courage to resist them, and preserving us from the destruction they sought to bring upon us. On the evening following, we saw our enemies carrying several of their dead or wounded men on their backs, who proceeded that night to send in their shot, as they had done the night before, and also still shouted as if the day had been certainly theirs, and they should without fail, have

prevailed against us, which they might have the more hopes of in regard that we discerned the coming of new companies to them to assist and strengthen them, and the unlikelihood of any coming to our help. They also used several stratagems to fire us, namely, by wild fire in cotton and linnen rags with brimstone in them, which rags they tyed to the piles of their arrows, sharp for the purpose, and shot them to the roof of our house, after they had set them on fire, which would have much endangered the burning thereof, had we not used means by cutting holes through the roof, and otherwise, to beat the said arrows down, and God being pleased to prosper our endeavours therein.—They carryed more combustible matter, as flax and hay, to the sides of the house, and set it on fire, and then flocked apace towards the door of the house, either to prevent our going forth to quench the fire, as we had done before, or to kill our men in their attempt to go forth, or else to break into the house by the door; whereupon we were forced to break down the wall of the house against the fire to put it out. They also shot a ball of wild fire into the garret of the house, which fell amongst a great heap of flax or tow therein, which one of our souldiers, through God's good Providence soon espied, and having water ready presently quenched it; and so we were preserved by the keeper of Israel, both our bodies from their shot, which they sent thick against us, and the house from being consumed to ashes, although we were but weak to defend our selves, we being not above twenty and six men with those of that small town, who were able for any service, and our enemies, as I judged them about, (if not above,) three hundred, I speak of the least, for many there present did guess them to be four or five hundred. It is the more to be observed, that so little hurt should be done by the enemies' shot, it commonly piercing the walls of the house, and flying amongst the people, and there being in the house fifty women and children besides the men before mentioned. But abroad in the yard, one Thomas Wilson of that town, being sent to fetch water for our help in further need, (that which we had being spent in putting out the fire,) was shot by the enemy in the upper jaw and in the neck, the anguish of which wound was such at the first that he cried out with a great noise, by reason whereof the Indians hearing him rejoiced and triumphed at it; but his wound was healed in a short time, praised be God.

On Wednesday, August the 4th, the Indians fortified themselves at the meeting house, and the barne, belonging to our

house, which they fortified both at the great doors, and at both ends, with posts, rails, boards, and hay, to save themselves from our shot. They also devised other stratagems, to fire our house, on the night following, namely, they took a cart, and filled it with flax, hay and candle-wood, and other combustible matter, and set up planks, fastened to the cart, to save themselves from the danger of our shot. Another invention they had to make the more sure work in burning the house. They got many poles of a considerable length and bigness, and spliced them together at the ends one of another, and made a carriage of them about fourteen rods long, setting the poles in two rows with peils laid cross over them at the front end, and dividing them said poles about three foot asunder, and in the said front of this their carriage they set a barrel, having made an hole through both heads, and put an axle-tree through them, to which they fastened the said poles, and under every joynt of the poles where they were spliced, they set up a pair of truckle wheeles to bear up the said carriages, and they loaded the front or fore-end thereof with matter fit for firing, as hay, and flaxe, and chips, &c. Two of these instruments they prepared, that they might convey fire to the house, with the more safety to themselves, they standing at such a distance from our shot, whilst they wheeled them to the house: great store of arrows they had also prepared to shoot fire upon the house that night; which we found after they were gone, they having left them there. But the Lord who is a present help in times of trouble, and is pleased to make his people's extremity his opportunity, did graciously prevent them of effecting what they hoped they should have done by the afore-said devices, partly by sending a showre of rain in season, whereby the matter prepared being wett would not so easily take fire as it otherwise would have done, and partly by aide coming to our help. For our danger would have been very great that night, had not the only wise God (blessed for ever) been pleased to send to us about an hour within night the worshipful Major Willard with Captain Parker of Groaton, and forty-six men more with five Indians to relieve us in the low estate into which we were brought; our eyes were unto him the holy one of Israel; in him we desired to place our trust, hoping that he would in the time of our great need appear for our deliverance, and confound all their plots by which they thought themselves most sure to prevail against us; and God who comforteth the afflicted, as he comforted the holy apostle Paul by the coming of Titus to him, so

he greatly comforted us his distressed servants both souldiers and town inhabitants, by the coming of the said honoured Major, and those with him. In whose so soon coming to us the good providence of God did marvellously appear; for the help that came to us by the honoured council's order (after the tydings they received by our post sent to them) came not to us till Saturday, August 7, in the afternoon, nor sooner could it well come in regard of their distance from us, *i.e.* if we had not had help before that time, we see not how we could have held out, the number of the Indians so encreasing, and they making so many assaults upon us, that our ammunition before that time would have been spent, and ourselves disenabled for any resistance, we being but few, and alwaies fain to stand upon our defence; that we had little time for refreshment of our selves either by food or sleep; the said honoured Major's coming to us so soon was thus occasioned; he had a commission from the honoured council (of which himself was one) to look after some Indians to the westward of Lancaster and Groaton, (where he himself lived) and to secure them, and was upon his march towards them on the foresaid Wednesday in the morning, August 4th, when tydings coming to Marlborough by those that returned thither as they were going to Connecticut, concerning what they saw at Brookfield as aforesaid, some of Marlborough knowing of the said Major's march from Lancaster that morning presently sent a post to acquaint him with the information they had received; the Major was gone before the post came to Lancaster; but there was one speedily sent after him, who overtook him about five or six miles from the said town; he being acquainted, that it was feared, that Brookfield (a small town of about fifteen or sixteen families) was either destroyed, or in great danger thereof, and conceiving it to require more speed to succour them (if they were not past help) than to proceed at present, as he before intended, and being also very desirous (if it were possible) to afford relief to them, (he being then not above thirty miles from them) he immediately altered his course and marched with his company towards us: and came to us about an hour after it was dark as aforesaid; though he knew not then, either of our being there nor of what had befallen us at the swampe and in the house those two days before.

The merciful providence of God also appeared in preventing the danger that the honoured Major and his company might have been in, when they came near us, for those beastly men, our

enemies skilful to destroy, indeavoured to prevent any help from coming to our relief, and therefore sent down sentinels, (some nearer and some further off) the furthest about two miles from us, who if they saw any coming from the bay they might give notice by an alarm. And there were about an hundred of them who for the most part kept at an house some little distance from us, by which if any help came from the said bay, they must pass, and so they intended (as we conceive) having notice by their sentinels of their approach to way-lay them, and if they could, to cut them off before they came to the house where we kept.

But as we probably guess, they were so intent and buisy in preparing their instruments (as abovesaid) for our destruction by fire, that they were not at the house where they used to keep for the purpose aforesaid, and that they heard not their sentinels when they shot; and so the Major's way was clear from danger till he came to our house. And that it was their purpose so to have fallen upon him, or any other coming to us at that house, is the more probable in that (as we have since had intelligence from some of the Indians themselves) there were a party of them at another place who let him pass by them without the least hurt or opposition, waiting for a blow to be given him at the said house, and then they themselves to fall upon them in the reare, as they intended to have done with us at the swamp, in case we had fled back as before expressed. The Major and company were no sooner come to the house, and understood (though at first they knew not they were English who were in the house, but thought that they might be Indians, and therefore were ready to have shot at us, till we discerning they were English by the Major's speaking, I caused the trumpet to be sounded) that the said Captain Hutchinson, myself, and company with the town's inhabitants were there, but the Indians also discerned that there were some come to our assistance, whereupon they spared not their shot, but poured it out on them; but through the Lords goodness, though they stood not farr asunder one from another, they killed not one man, wounded only two of his company; and killed the Major's son's* horse; after that, we within the house perceived

*[It does not appear which of the Major's nine sons is referred to. Of a family which has afforded so many descendants, and some of them highly distinguished, it may be proper to give their names and the times of their births, so far as they have been ascertained after most patient and diligent research.

1. Josiah Willard (no record of his birth has been found). He married Hannah Hosmer in 1657.

2. Simon Willard, born 31st January, 1640.

3. Samuel Willard (the time of his birth has not been ascertained). He married Abigail Sherman, and after her death, Eunice Tyng.

the Indians shooting so at them, we hastened the Major and all his company into the house as fast as we could, and their horses into a little yard before the house, where they wounded five other horses that night; after they were come into the house to us, the enemies continued their shooting some considerable time, so that we may well say, had not the Lord been on our side when these cruel heathens rose up against us, they had then swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. But wherein they delt proudly, the Lord was above them.

When they saw their divers designs unsuccessful, and their hopes therein disappointed, they then fired the house and barne (wherein they had before kept to lye in wait to surprise any coming to us) that by the light thereof they might the better direct their shot at us, but no hurt was done thereby, praised be the Lord. And not long after they burnt the meeting house wherein their fortifications were, as also the barne, which belonged to our house, and so perceiving more strength come to our assistance, they did, as we suppose, despair of effecting any more mischief against us. And therefore the greatest part of them, towards the breaking of the day, August the fifth, went away and left us, and we were quiet from any further molestations by them; and on that morning we went forth of the house without danger, and so daily afterwards, only one man was wounded about two dayes after, as he went out to look after horses, by some few of them sculking thereabouts. We cannot tell how many of them we killed, in all that time, but one, that afterwards was taken, confessed that there were killed and wounded about eighty men or more.—Blessed be the Lord God of our salvation who kept us from being all a prey to their teeth. But before they went away they burnt all the town except the house we kept in, and another that was not then finished. They also made great spoyle of the cattel belonging to the inhabitants; and after our entrance into the house, and during the time of our confinement there, they either killed or drove away almost all the horses of our company.

We continued there, both well and wounded, towards a fortnight, and August the thirteenth Captain Hutchinson and my

4. Henry Willard, born 4th June, 1655.

5. John Willard, born 12th February, 1657.

6. Daniel Willard, born 26th December, 1658.

7. Joseph Willard, born 4th April, 1660.

8. Benjamin Willard, born (time not ascertained).

9. Jonathan Willard, born 14th December, 1660.

The first six were probably born in Concord, Mass.

The 7th and 9th and perhaps the 8th were born in Lancaster. Further notices of this family may be found in *Farmer & Moore's Collections*, Vol. I.]

self, with the most of those that had escaped without hurt, and also some of the wounded, came from thence; my son Thomas and some other wounded men, came not from thence, being not then able to endure travel so farr as we were from the next town, till about a fortnight after. We came to Marlborough on August the fourteenth, where Captain Hutchinson being not recovered of his wound before his coming from Brookfield and overtired with his long journey, by reason of his weakness, quickly after grew worse, and more dangerously ill, and on the nineteenth day of the said month dyed, and was there the day after buried, the Lord being pleased to deny him a return to his own habitation, and his near relations at Boston, though he was come the greatest part of his journey thitherward. The inhabitants of the town also, not long after, men, women, and children, removed safely with what they had left, to several places, either where they had lived before their planting or sitting down there; or where they had relations to receive and entertain them. The honoured Major Willard stayed at Brookfield some weeks after our coming away, there being several companies of souldiers sent up thither and to Hadly and the towns thereabouts, which are about thirty miles from Brookfield, whither also the Major went for a time upon the service of the country in the present warr, and from whence there being need of his presence for the ordering of matters concerning his own regiment, and the safety of the towns belonging to it, he through God's goodness and mercy, returned in safety and health to his house, and dear relations at Groaton.

Thus I have endeavoured to set down and declare both what the Lord did against us in the loss of several person's lives, and the wounding of others, some of which wounds were very painful in dressing, and long ere they were healed, besides many dangers that we were in, and fears that we were exercised with; and also what great things he was pleased to do for us in frustrating their many attempts, and vouchsafing such a deliverance to us. The Lord avenge the blood that hath been shed by these heathen, who hate us without a cause, though he be most righteous in all that hath befallen there, and in all other parts of the country; he help us to humble ourselves before him, and with our whole hearts, to return to him, and also to improve all his mercies, which we still enjoy, that so his anger may cease towards us and he may be pleased either to make our enemies at peace with us, or more, destroy them before us. I tarried at Marlborough with Captain Hutchinson until his death, and came home to

Concord, August the 21, (though not thoroughly recovered of my wound) and so did others that went with me. But since I am reasonable well, though I have not the use of my hand and arm as before: my son Thomas, though in great hazard of life for some time after his return to Concord, yet is now very well cured, and his strength well restored! Oh that we could praise the Lord for his great goodness towards us. Praised be his name, that though he took away some of us, yet was pleased to spare so many of us, and adde unto our dayes; he help us whose souls he hath delivered from death, and eyes from tears, and feet from falling, to walk before him in the land of the living, till our great change come, and to sanctifie his name in all his ways about us, that both our afflictions, and our mercies may quicken us to live more to his glory all our dayes.*

PASSAGE FROM REV. NATHAN FISKE'S HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON BROOKFIELD, DECEMBER 31, 1775.

As this town is of ancient date, and, compared with most of the towns in this county, even with the shire-town itself, is like an elder matron amidst a group of youngerly females; and as it has been famous for Indian inhabitants, Indian wars, and Indian barbarities, I have for a considerable time felt a strong inclination and desire to search into its history, to find out its origin, the difficulties and hardships of its first English inhabitants, its gradual increase and progressive improvements. In short, I wished to be acquainted with whatever was curious, entertaining, or instructive in the circumstances of the town, and the transactions or sufferings of its early settlers. With this view I have searched all the histories of the country I could meet with—inquired for manuscripts that might have preserved a circumstantial account of some occurrences which the printed histories are wholly silent about, or give but a general sketch of. I have consulted many of the descendants of the first settlers, and those that have been most acquainted with the affairs of the town. I have perused records, &c. But the result of my inquiries does not wholly satisfy my curiosity or answer my wish. No intelligence is to be obtained concerning some things that have happened; and many circumstances relative to divers events that might have been entertaining at this day, have not been handed down by tradition. Our ancestors were under great disadvantages as to making extensive observations, or keeping exact records, or preserving them for the perusal of posterity. However, I have gleaned a few things relative to the settling and subsequent improvements of this town, which may serve as a clue to trace the conduct of divine Providence, to point out many instances of the divine goodness, to lead our minds to some religious reflections, to excite gratitude in our hearts for the wonderful works which God

*[The 21st October, 1675, was kept by Capt. Wheeler and those who returned with him as a day of praise and thanksgiving to God for their remarkable deliverance and safe return, when Rev. Edward Bulkley, of Concord, preached a sermon to them, from "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Psalm cxvi. 12.]

hath done for us and our fathers, to encourage our hope and trust in the same power and goodness to protect and bless us and our posterity, and to engage us to *keep his commandments*.

I cannot find exactly at how early a period the first English settlements began in this town, nor who the persons were that began them. A tribe of Indians were the original inhabitants; nor did they move off before or at the coming of the white people, but both English and Indians lived together in friendship for some time.

These Indians were commonly called Quaboag Indians. Governor Hutchinson in his history says, the Nipnet or Nipmuck Indians ambushed the party that went to treat with them at Meminimisset. I suppose it was in conjunction with the Indians of Quaboag. For these, partaking in the uneasiness and commotion that Philip was endeavoring to excite among all the tribes through the country, and growing somewhat shy of their English neighbors, and taking offence at some damages they had sustained from their cattle, they quitted their lands here just before the war broke out, and went up to Meminimisset, and assisted in the ambuscade and in burning Brookfield. After which they returned no more, unless for mischief, but scattered among other Indians till they were no more distinguished or known. From a similarity in divers words in their language, it is probable they intermixed with the Stockbridge Indians.

It is certain there were English inhabitants here many years before there were any between this place and Marlborough on the east, Connecticut River on the west, and Canada on the north.

In the year 1660, *i. e.*, forty years after the first settlement of Plymouth, several of the inhabitants of Ipswich petitioned the Great and General Court for a grant of land in these parts. The Court granted them six miles square, or so much land as should be contained in such a compass, near Quaboag Pond, upon certain conditions, "provided they have twenty families there resident within three years, and that they have an able minister settled there within the said term, such as this court shall approve; and that they make due provision in some way or other for the future, either by setting apart of lands or what else shall be thought mete for the continuance of the ministry among them." I insert this, principally as a specimen of the pious principles that actuated our ancestors, and the care which the legislative body took that new settlements should have the gospel and the administration of the ordinances among them, as early, as stately, and as regularly as possible. And no doubt it is owing to this care, under Providence, that the country flourished so greatly both in spirituals and temporals; for it hath been often observed that no people was ever the poorer, but on the contrary flourished the faster, for maintaining the gospel ministry among them. And it is undoubtedly owing to the wise and pious provision of our laws and civil establishment, obliging parishes to settle and support evangelical and learned ministers, that the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and New Hampshire are so much better instructed in the things of religion, and are so much more remarkable for the strict observation of the Sabbath, and for good morals than those of most of the other colonies.

This was the legal origin of the town. These men, that they might have a *just and equitable* as well as a *legal* right to the land, purchased it of the natives, who claimed and possessed it, and it was conveyed to them by deed. It is somewhat probable there were small beginnings made here by the English before this grant. But this is not material. It is certain that from

small and early beginnings the settlement increased, even under the disadvantages and discouragements of that day, so that upon application made to the General Court in the year 1673 the inhabitants were incorporated into a township by the name of Brookfield. And in the year 1675, when the town was burnt, they had at least twenty families, a meeting-house, and preaching, though no settled minister.

Captain Wheeler's Narrative is here reprinted from the Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society, II., 1827; and the notes there added are given at the foot of the preceding pages. The preliminary note is as follows: "The following Narrative is very scarce, and must have been so when Governor Hutchinson wrote his History of Massachusetts, as it does not appear, in giving an account of the expedition (History of Massachusetts, Vol. I. 265) in which his ancestor sustained such an important part and lost his life, that the historian has made any reference whatever to Captain Wheeler's Narrative, which he would most likely have done, had he known of its existence. The following is printed from a copy which appears to have belonged to Deputy Governor Danforth of Cambridge, and which has been obligingly furnished the Publishing Committee by a Gentleman of Salem, Mass., who is known for his very minute and thorough researches in the early history of our country. A few notes have been handed the Committee by a member of the Society."

Captain Wheeler's Narrative is a valuable record of one of the most tragical episodes in King Philip's War, and well illustrates the hardships and dangers under which the settlement of Massachusetts was pushed from Boston and the coast back to the Connecticut. On the last day of the year 1775 the Rev. Nathan Fiske, D.D., pastor of the Third Church in Brookfield, delivered an historical discourse, in which he gave an account of the settlement of the town and its distresses during the Indian wars. The principal portions of this address—which was published by Thomas and John Fleet, Boston, 1776—were printed in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, I., 1792. The opening pages of this, covering the early history of the town up to the time of the events described in Captain Wheeler's Narrative, are printed above. Dr. Fiske's account of these latter events is taken chiefly from Governor Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts. There is printed in the same volume of the Historical Society's Collections a description of the town of Brookfield, by Dr. Fiske.

In 1828, Rev. Joseph I. Foot gave an historical discourse covering the early history of Brookfield; and in the second edition of this, 1843, Wheeler's Narrative and other interesting material were included. The oration by Rev. Lyman Whiting, D.D., at the celebration in 1860 of the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Brookfield, is an important address. In the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, October, 1887, are two papers of special value: one by Rev. Grindall Reynolds, on "King Philip's War, with special reference to the Attack on Brookfield in August, 1675"; the other by Lucius R. Page, on "Wheeler's Defeat, 1675: Where?" There now exists a flourishing Quaboag Historical Society, drawing its members from the several towns made up from the ancient Brookfield; and the studies which it has prompted have high worth.

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